

XIV.—*A note on the Buzzards of the Ethiopian Region.*

By W. L. SCLATER, M.A., M.B.O.U.

(Plate V.)

RECENTLY while cataloguing the Accipitres of the British Museum I came across a remarkable new form of Buzzard from Somaliland, which I described at the meeting of the British Ornithologists' Club in November last year. This has now been figured (Pl. V.) by Mr. Grönvold, and I have thought it might be useful to workers to give a short synopsis of the African species of *Buteo*, especially as some points have arisen which do not appear to have been previously noticed.

The following is a list of the species:—

Buteo ferox ferox.

Accipiter ferox S. G. Gmelin, Nov. Comm. Acad. Petrop. xv. 1771, p. 442, pl. x.: Astrachan.

[For the synonyms of this form, see Hartert, Vög. pal. Faun. p. 1115.]

Distr. S.E. Russia and the steppes of central Asia east to Irkutsk, south to the Himalaya, Asia Minor, and Egypt. Farther south in winter to the plains of northern India and the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.

Buteo jakal jakal.

Falco jakal Daudin, Traité, ii. 1800, p. 161: Cape of Good Hope.

Distr. South Africa, including the Cape, Orange Free State, Natal, and Transvaal Provinces, but not north of the Limpopo so far as is known.

Buteo jakal augur.

Falco (Buteo) augur Rüppell, N. Wirbelt. 1836, p. 38, pl. 16: Abyssinia.

Falco (Buteo) hydrophilus Rüppell, *ibid.* p. 39, pl. 17: Abyssinia.

Distr. The mountains of Abyssinia from Senafé southwards through the high plateau of central Africa to southern Rhodesia, where the Museum has a young example collected by Swynnerton at Chirinda.

That there are two distinct phases of this species admits now of no doubt; the series in the Museum is a very fine one, and there are both young and adults of either phase. Rüppell's pl. 16, fig. 1 is an adult in the black phase, fig. 2 a not quite adult in the white-bellied phase; pl. 17, fig. 1 is a young bird in the white-bellied phase, fig. 2 a young bird in the black phase.

***Buteo jakal archeri* (Pl. V.).**

Buteo jakal archeri W. L. Slater, Bull. B. O. C. xxxix. 1918, p. 17: Waghar, Somaliland.

The original description is as follows:—

“Resembling *Buteo jakal augur*, but the white on the scapulars and back replaced by reddish; below from the lower breast posteriorly to the under tail-coverts, including the thighs, rich rufous instead of white; a few splashes of the same rufous on the under wing-coverts; chin, throat, and upper breast white, with a few spots of black and a slight trace of rusty stain on some of the feathers. ‘Iris dark brown, bill dark slate, cere and legs orange, claws blue slate’ (*Bury*).

“*Measurements.* Wing 400 mm.; tail 195; tarsus 85; bill, without cere, measured with callipers, 28.

“*Type*, a male from Waghar, Somaliland, collected by Mr. G. W. Bury, 6 Oct., 1905. B.M. reg. no. 1908/12/12 a/5.

“There is another example in the Museum marked ‘30 miles inland from Berbera,’ obtained by Mr. E. Lort Phillips and identified by Shelley (‘Ibis,’ 1885, p. 391) as *B. augur*.

“Two other examples collected by Mr. G. F. Archer, C.M.G., H.M.’s Commissioner for the Somaliland Protectorate, at Bihendula and Lower Sheikh in Somaliland are in the collection of Col. Stephenson Clarke, through whose courtesy I have been able to exhibit them to you here to-night.



BUTEO JAKAL ARCHERI.

“The bird is named after Mr. Archer, who has recently been making a very fine collection of Somaliland birds.

“I regard the Jackal and Augur Buzzards, together with the new Somaliland form, as constituting a group of three subspecific forms under the specific name of *Buteo jakal*.”

***Buteo auguralis*.**

Buteo auguralis Salvadori, Atti Soc. Ital. Milan. viii. 1865, p. 377: Abyssinia and Gebel Aidun in the Lybian Desert.

Distr. North-eastern and western Africa from southern Abyssinia and the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan westwards to the Gold Coast Colony and south to Gaboon and Angola.

There are examples in the British Museum from Sennar, the Baro river, the Bahr el Ghazal, Sierra Leone, Gold Coast, and Gaboon.

This species can always be distinguished by the characteristic chestnut-reddish patch on the side of the neck and in the adult by its rich rufous tail, which has only one sub-terminal black band; below it is white, often with a patch of blackish brown on the chest and a few spots of the same colour on the rest of the underparts, the feathers of the shoulders and back have very dark chestnut-brown edgings: wing averages 330 mm.

***Buteo buteo rufiventer*.**

Buteo rufiventer Jerdon, Madras Journ. xiii. 1844, p. 165: Nilgiri hills; id. Illustr. Ind. Orn. pl. 27.

Buteo vulpinus Lichtenstein, Nomencl. Av. Mus. Berol. 1854, p. 3: Kaffirland [nom. nud.].

Buteo anceps A. E. Brehm, Naumannia, 1855, p. 6: Upper Blue Nile.

Buteo minor Heuglin, S.B. Akad. Wien, xix. 1856, p. 257: Nubia, etc.

Buteo delalandi des Murs, Rev. Mag. Zool. 1862, p. 52 [in part]: South Africa.

Buteo desertorum auct. nec Daudin.

Distr. Breeding in south-east Russia and perhaps Asia

Minor and Persia, east to western Siberia and Turkestan, south in winter to Africa from the Sudan to the Cape Province, also to the hills of southern India and Ceylon. Once in England.

This species has up till recently been known as *Buteo desertorum*, but as Hartert (Vög. pal. Faun. ii. p. 1126) has clearly shown, Daudin's name is inapplicable, as neither the plate nor the figure given by Levaillant, on which Daudin's name is based, can be identified with the Steppe Buzzard as it has been generally called. Hartert proposed to adopt Brehm's *Buteo anceps*, a name founded on an example from the upper Blue Nile. Recently, however, when cataloguing the Steppe Buzzards in the British Museum I came across an old dismantled specimen which I unhesitatingly believe to be the original of Jerdon's plate in the 'Illustrations of Indian Ornithology,' and must be regarded as the type of *Buteo rufiventer*. It is undoubtedly an example of the bird which has been hitherto known as *B. desertorum*. Moreover, there are in the Museum several additional examples from the Nilgiri hills obtained subsequently by Hume's collector, Davison (see 'Stray Feathers,' x. pp. 159, 338).

Under these circumstances I see no reason why the Steppe Buzzard should not in future be known as *Buteo buteo rufiventer*.

***Buteo oreophilus*.**

Buteo oreophilus Hartert & Neumann, Orn. Monatsber. xxii. 1914, p. 31: Koritscha, Djam Djam, S. Abyssinia.

Distr. Mountains of central and north-eastern Africa. There are examples in the British Museum from Ruwenzori, Kenia, and Kilimanjaro.

This species, recently described by Hartert and Neumann, appears to be a quite distinct form characterized by the absence of rufous from the plumage, which is dusky brown slightly varied with white on the bases and edges of some of the feathers; below white, spotted and streaked with brown. The tail is brown with six to eight narrow bands of paler.

The wing of a male from Ruwenzori measures 330, of a female about 340 mm.

The examples from Ruwenzori were identified as the immature stages of *B. auguralis*, but there seems to be little doubt that they are a distinct species confined to the mountains.

With this form I am now inclined to identify some Buzzards from South Africa collected by Claude Grant. These I myself named *Buteo desertorum* (Ibis, 1912, p. 12), but I felt uncertain about the identification at the time, and I am now convinced that they are not *Buteo buteo rufiventer* (i. e. *desertorum*).

They differ from the Ruwenzori birds in being slightly lighter above, while below they are not nearly so heavily spotted, and there is a tinge of rufous on the tail.

It seems probable from Mr. C. Grant's field-notes that they were breeding, and the date when the Transvaal birds were collected (May) shows that they were not birds wintering in South Africa. The wings of the males measure 315-330, and of the females 335-358 mm.

I should be inclined to regard *Buteo oreophilus* as a resident race of *B. b. rufiventer* which has recently become established in the mountains of Africa.

Buteo menetriesi.

Buteo menetriesi Bogdanow, Ois. Caucasus, 1879, p. 5 : Caucasus [in Russian]; vide J. f. O. 1880, p. 260, for translation, also Seebohm, Ibis, 1883, p. 5.

Distr. Caucasus region, apparently ranging into Africa. There are examples in the British Museum from Abyssinia, Nyasaland, and the Cape Province.

This species, which Hartert (Vög. pal. Faun. p. 1126) regards as identical with *B. b. anceps* (= *B. b. rufiventer*), is represented in the Museum by two specimens from Lenkoran on the Caspian Sea from the Seebohm collection. These differ, however, from the true *B. b. rufiventer* in having the plain-coloured unbanded red tail; they are also much more rufous above and below than the typical Steppe

Buzzard, and in many respects are like a small edition of *B. ferox*.

In the collection of the British Museum I found some very similar specimens from Africa, viz.: 1 ♂, Managasha Mt., 10,000 feet, nr. Addis Ababa, May (Zaphiro); 1, Zomba, July; 1 ♂, Mt. Malosa, 5500 feet, November, Nyasaland (Whyte); 1, East London, Cape Prov., September (Rickard); and 1 from South Africa with no history.

Here again we have a May and a July bird which should be breeding in Russia during the months in which they were taken in Africa.

As it does not seem possible to identify these Buzzards with *B. b. rufirenter* (*desertorum* auct.), I have provisionally assigned them to this Caucasian race in the hope that what I have done may draw the attention of others to the difficulties which surround the identification of African Buzzards and encourage further observation and collecting.

XV.—*Notes on Collections of Birds in the British Museum, from Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, and Argentina.* Part II. PODICIPEDIFORMES — ACCIPITRIFORMES. By CHARLES CHUBB, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.*

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Family PODICIPEDIDÆ.

Podiceps brachyrhynchus.

Podiceps brachyrhynchus Chapman, Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist. xiii. 1899, p. 255: Matto Grosso.

No. 1252. ♀ imm. Eten, N.W. Peru, 15 metres, 21 Sept. 1899.

Podiceps americanus.

Podiceps americanus Garnot, Voy. 'Coquille,' Zool. i. 1829 p. 599: Chile.

* Continued from p. 55.